

“FREE RELIGION.”

THREE STRIKING ESSAYS.
SECOND SESSION OF THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION—ESSAYS BY W. J. POTTER, FRANCIS E. ABBOT, AND JAMES PARTON—REMARKS OF COLT. W. HIGGINSON, M. L. ELLINGER AND OTHERS.
A small audience greeted the two essayists who appeared at Cooper Institute yesterday under the

appeared at Cooper Institute yesterday, and the papers of the Free Religion Association. During the first session, which lasted from 10 a. m. to 2 p. m., papers were read by W. J. Potter of New Bedford on "Ecclesiastical Power of Free Religion," and by Francis E. Abbot of Boston on "The Foreign Mission Society." The Rev. O. A. Frothingham introduced the reading of Col. T. W. Higginson, M. L. Eliot, and others took part in the proceedings. In the evening James Parton read an essay to a large and very intelligent audience on "Taxation of Church Property," which was followed by a discussion. Mr. Parton's paper is reproduced below in full, with Mr. Potter's address, an abstract of Mr. Abbot's paper, a careful report of Mr. Higginson's remarks, and an outline of the discussion of the both sessions.

THE PROCEEDINGS.

THE REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM, before introducing the first essayist to a comparatively small audience in Cooper Union, yesterday morning, claimed that all people should give attention to the practical subjects considered by the Free Religious Association. "To say," said he, "that these are not practical questions seems to me a singular misapplication of terms. It is not the taxation of church property a practical question; it is not the question of ecclesiastical union a practical question; it is not the question of superstition a practical question; the question of superstition is vital; the question of skepticism is important; secularism costs many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to the common people. The question of denominationalism is of great importance; the question of Foreign Missions is of vital importance, for this Report of Foreign Missions is a very heavy tax upon the community. They are certainly as vital as any political questions are, for instance, the President of the United States, the President of the Republic of France, the President of the Empire State. They seem to be of great importance at the moment; but somehow or other when they are decided they turn out to be of very little importance one way or another. In the United States it matters little whether the President is elected for four years or not compared with the question whether a large portion of real estate is exempted from taxation, for the exemption of real estate is a question of the most vital character, which is a serious matter, but all their social relations, their interests, it touches the question in what direction they are to improve their moral affairs; in a word, concerns their whole social life. It is not, therefore, true that the Free Religious Association presents itself to people who think about speculative themes. We do not think much about speculative themes. I doubt if there is one here who would call himself by the name of a theologian, or a metaphysician, or a philosopher. But we are all men who are harnessed to some sort of cart, and are pulling that through the streets every day for the benefit of our fellow-men in common, practical, social affairs. But I do not propose to make a speech, and you want to listen to the men who have come from abroad. I shall introduce to you William J. Potter."

RELIGION IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME. SERMON
ADDRESS BY THE REV. W. J. POTTER OF NEW-BRIT-
FORD.

Religion has had in its historical career many
and bitter battles. It has had to meet the spirit of
skepticism. It has been tormented by the hosts of
infidelity. It has encountered the cold criticisms
of philosophy. It has been compelled to make war upon
the material and animal propensities of mankind—
in the old evangelical phrase, "fight the world, the flesh,
and the devil." It has had to encounter in battle every
form of malice, wrong, wickedness, sin, and
misery, with which the human race has been burdened.
And yet, notwithstanding this picture of conflict with
its natural enemies beyond its own lines, religion
has had no enemies more hostile, more bitter, more per-
sistent in their antagonism, than the forces which it
found in its own citadel, the Church. Its hardest foe,
after all, have been "they of its own household," as ancient
and modern history have too often witnessed in the
bloody persecutions which have marked the
progress of the Christian religion through history—the
murder of benefactors by the hands of the masses of
the unenlightened.

[illegible]

TO-DAY'S RELIGION AGAINST YESTERDAY'S.
This civil conflict, therefore, of religion with fees in its domain is always the conflict between the open-

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